

P A R K S     A N D  
O P E N     S P A C E

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## Parks and Open Space

Approximately 20 acres of land in East Cambridge is classified as open space. This land area is primarily parks and playgrounds. Five of the seven parks in East Cambridge are located in the residential neighborhood: Ahern Field, Gore Street Park, Hurley Street Park, Costa Lopez Park and Silva Playground. The remaining two parks—Front Park and Lechmere Canal Park—are located in the Riverfront area. Centanni Way will be completed in 1989 and Charles Park on the Riverfront is expected to be completed in 1991. (See map of East Cambridge parks on the following page).

With the exception of the newly constructed parks (Costa Lopez, Lechmere Canal, and Front Park), the City's open space inventory rates East Cambridge neighborhood parks in fair to poor condition.

The average cost to renovate neighborhood parks has risen dramatically in recent years. It now costs approximately \$250,000-\$300,000 to substantially renovate the typical East Cambridge playground.

Since 1980, the City has spent nearly \$10 million to construct or renovate East Cambridge parks. The bulk of the funds (\$8.5 million) has been spent for Lechmere Canal Park. In the next two years, an additional \$1.8 million will be spent to construct or renovate other East Cambridge parks including: Gore Street (\$300,000), Centanni way (\$500,000) and Charles Park (\$1 million).

## Neighborhood-Wide Survey (Bell Associates)

(1) The amount of recreational facilities and open space is not considered a major problem among residents.

- When asked about the lack of recreational facilities, 15% said it is a major problem, 25% said it is minor, and 47% said it is no problem.
- When asked about the lack of open space, 25% said it is a major problem, 27% think it is a minor problem, and 43% said it is not a problem.

(2) The condition of parks are generally not considered to be a major problem in East Cambridge.

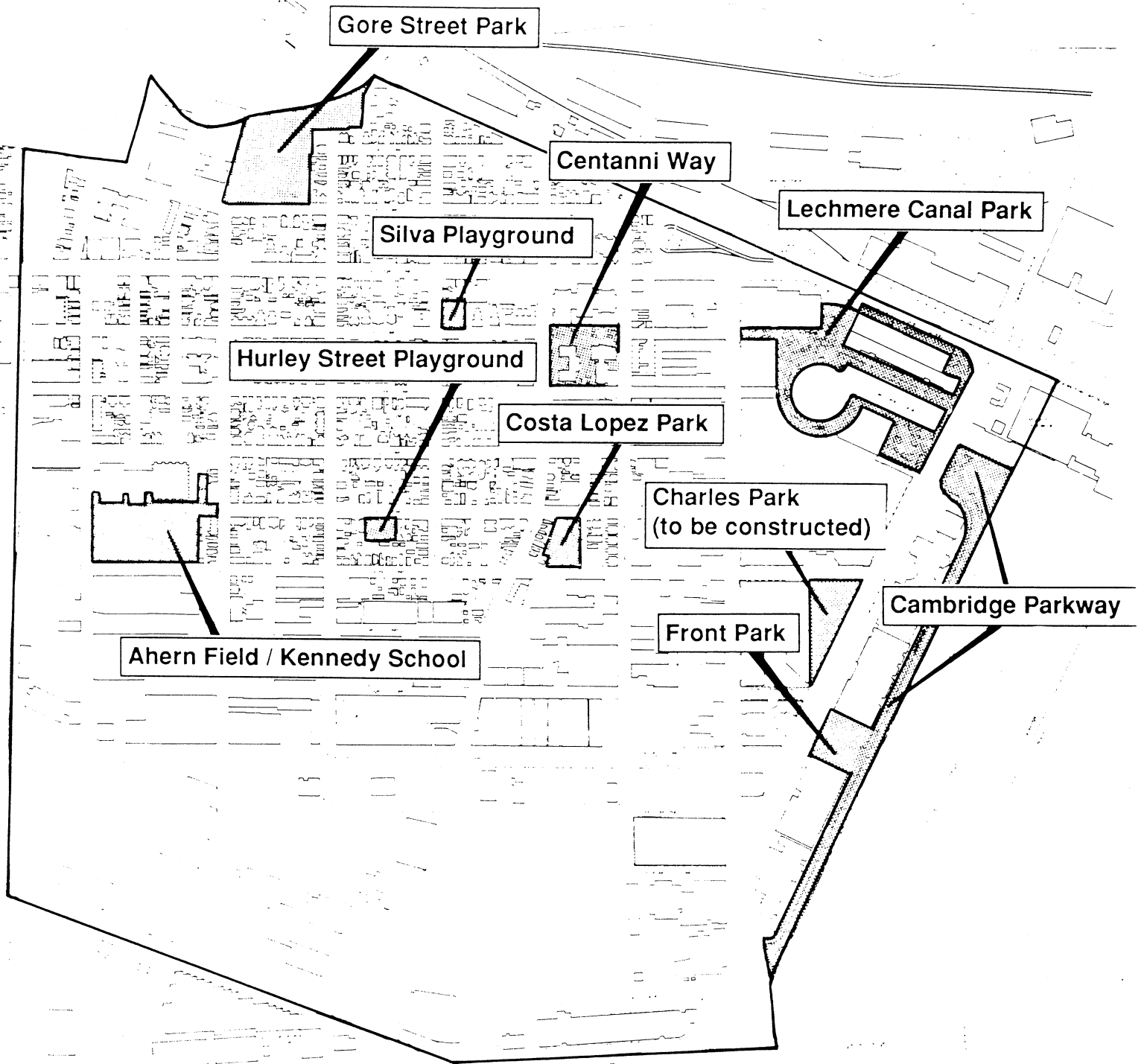
- 18% of residents think rundown parks are a major problem, 27% think they are a minor problem, and 43% think they are not a problem.

## Neighborhood Organization Survey (Community Development Department)

(1) East Cambridge Stabilization Committee and Planning Team participants are about evenly split on whether there is enough open space in East Cambridge.

- 52% think there is not enough open space and 48% feel there is the right amount of open space.

(2) Neighborhood group members would like to see more sitting areas (60%), landscaping (45%), active parks (40%), and community gardens (40%).



**EAST CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY**  
**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

City of Cambridge

Cambridge Community Development Department

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(3) The members rated most parks in fair to poor condition.

- 77% rated Gore Street park fair or poor; 66% rated Kennedy Field fair or poor; and 54% rated Silva Playground fair to poor.
- Costa Lopez Park and Hurley Street Park received good or excellent ratings.

## Study Committee Concerns

(1) *Maintenance*: The parks are not well maintained.

(2) *Security*: There is poor lighting and inadequate police protection in most East Cambridge parks.

(3) *Programming*: There are not enough programs at the parks for children and teens.

(4) *Park Management*: There is no city department which takes overall responsibility for park planning, maintenance and programming. As a result, residents do not know where to address their concerns and the City fails to take a comprehensive, preventative approach to managing the park system.

## Parks and Open Space Recommendations

(1) The City is currently working on developing a comprehensive maintenance plan for Cambridge parks. As part of this effort, the City should examine ways to improve the coordination among the various city agencies involved in park service and explore the centralization of

planning, development and maintenance under a single agency.

(2) Initiate a pilot program to involve residents in park beautification and maintenance. The City should work with residents by targeting one East Cambridge park and forming a neighborhood committee to implement a small-scale program.

(3) Increase the resources for recreation programming in East Cambridge parks. In addition, the City should establish a training program and a summer internship program to train staff associated with the new programs.

(4) Address the problems of security and vandalism in East Cambridge parks by:

- a. Increased police presence and lighting in the parks.
- b. Strict enforcement of the 10:00 p.m. curfew.

(5) The newly developed East Cambridge parks should be dedicated to Luke Agnetta and Tom Walker in memory of their long and dedicated service to the community.

(6) Enhance the design of future East Cambridge park renovations by considering:

- a. Clearly defined play areas and uses for people of different ages.
- b. A performance area.
- c. Better lighting.
- d. More benches.
- e. More trash receptacles.

(7) Post signs in East Cambridge parks to encourage residents to keep the parks clean.

(8) Identify and develop areas in the neighborhood that can be used for outdoor sitting, plantings and community gardens.